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Introduction

This document has been prepared for the convenience of students as an overview of the Ph.D. program in Exceptional Students. It is not intended, nor should it be used, as a substitute for a careful reading of documents of the College of Education. It is the student’s responsibility to know about and keep up with requirements for his or her program. The official document is the Georgia State University Graduate Catalog for the academic year in which the student was admitted.

Program Assumptions

The doctoral program for preparing educators to become research professionals and teacher educators in higher education is based on these assumptions:

♦ Individuals preparing to become program leaders in higher education need a foundation of broad general education based in the major academic disciplines.

♦ Special education program leaders in higher education understand, respect, and value the multicultural backgrounds and diverse educational needs of students in schools and promote cooperative programs.

♦ Special education program leaders in higher education understand evidence-based practice and apply research on effective instruction and personnel preparation to their preparation of teachers. We believe this is accomplished, in part, by having doctoral students collaborate with faculty members who are conducting research.

♦ Special education program leaders can identify and evaluate teaching and service delivery options of programs that are related to the educational and developmental needs of individuals with disabilities.

♦ Special education program leaders possess the knowledge and skills to develop and modify programs for students with disabilities as well as programs for other educators who work with these students. The knowledge and skills should be based in personnel experience, professional literature, and outcome data.

♦ Special education program leaders provide observation, feedback, supervision, and self-evaluation of personnel in applied experiences.

♦ Special education program leaders can use technology to access resources, communicate and collaborate with colleagues, and present information.
Program Philosophy

Faculty members in the Special Education program at Georgia State University are committed to preparing special educators as program leaders in higher education who can become change agents through their research contributions to the evidence base. These higher education leaders will make decisions that provide high quality instruction and support services consistent with the diverse needs and abilities of individuals with disabilities and their families. Faculty members in the Special Education program recognize that the higher education researchers and leaders being prepared must have the flexibility to adapt to the changing role of the special educator, changing patterns regarding how special education services are delivered, and changing social and economic contexts in which individuals with disabilities live. Graduates of this program are prepared to take on the role of faculty members in special education at institutions of higher education, providing teaching, scholarship, and service. These individuals will be able to train teachers whose research-based education has prepared them to implement best practices in special education, to communicate effectively, and to work collaboratively with other special educators, general educators, parents, and support personnel.
Doctoral Program Advisory Committees

Two advisory committees guide the student’s course of doctoral study. These are the Doctoral Program Advisory Committee and the Dissertation Advisory Committee. Students are responsible for the completion and timeliness of all forms that have to be submitted in each step of the student’s doctoral study as outlined below and in the GSU Graduate Catalog. The forms include signatures from faculty members on these two committees.

Doctoral Program Advisory Committee

The members of the Doctoral Program Advisory Committee assist the student in the following activities:

- Plan and approve an appropriate program of study
- Define and approve non-course work requirements (e.g., residency, internship)
- Prepare and grade the major area of study component of the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination

The Department Chair appoints a temporary major professor upon admission of the student. This professor assists the student in initial course selection and the selection of the Doctoral Program Advisory Committee. The committee composition should be decided as soon as possible, but not later than the accrual of 27 semester hours of course work, or no later than one calendar year from the beginning of course work, whichever comes earlier. (The major professor does not become permanent until the official Advisory Committee is approved and filed as outlined below.)

The Doctoral Program Advisory Committee consists of a minimum of three members as follows:

The major professor serves as the chair of the Committee. He or she is a full-time tenure-track member of the College of Education and holds primary appointment in Special Education. The major professor needs to have been a faculty member at GSU for at least one academic year, hold an earned doctorate, have served on a previous doctoral committee within Special Education at GSU, and have Graduate Faculty Status in the College of Education.

A second member of the Committee must be a full-time member in Special Education in the Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education, holding an earned doctorate.

A third member of the Committee represents a major other than that of the student and holds an earned doctorate. This person must be a faculty member whose primary appointment is outside the student’s program (i.e., Special Education).

At all times, a majority of the membership of the Committee is from the Special Education program. All committee members but one must hold Graduate Faculty Status in the College of Education.

All appointments to the Doctoral Program Advisory Committee, including its chair, are subject to approval by the student, the department chair, and the dean of the College of Education. After the Committee has been established, any subsequent change of membership is documented as the student advances to candidacy (i.e., via signatures on the prospectus approval form). If committee
members change, students are encouraged to send an email to Carla Woods in the Office of Academic Assistance so that she can verify the composition of the committee prior to the submission of signed documents.

**Doctoral Dissertation Advisory Committee**

At the time of preparation of the dissertation prospectus, appropriate changes in the membership and/or chairmanship of the Doctoral Program Advisory Committee are made in order to constitute the Doctoral Dissertation Advisory Committee. The student and the Committee consider reconstitution of its membership to best facilitate the dissertation research.

In every case, the Committee is expanded by at least one additional member between completion of the comprehensive examination and submission of the dissertation prospectus. The resulting Dissertation Advisory Committee, representing expertise in both the research topic and the proposed research methodology, includes no fewer than four members.

The Doctoral Dissertation Advisory Committee has supervisory responsibility for judging the acceptability of the dissertation prospectus and recommending advancement to candidacy.

All appointments to the Doctoral Dissertation Advisory Committee, including its chair, are subject to approval by the student, the department chair, and the dean of the College of Education. The chairperson must hold Graduate Faculty status in the College of Education and all other committee members but one must hold graduate faculty status. A majority of the membership of the Committee must be from the Special Education program. After the Committee has been established, any subsequent change of membership must be approved by the Office of Academic Assistance.

**Policy for Changing Major Advisors**

Students may change major advisors only one time during the program. In the event that it becomes desirable to change major advisors, the student will meet first with his/her advisor to discuss the proposed change. Then the student will make an appointment to meet with the Department Chair to provide written and verbal justification for the request and to submit the Request for Change of Advisor Form to the Department Chair. The Department Chair may call a meeting with the student and major advisor to discuss the change prior to bringing the request to the Post-Master’s/Master’s Advisory (PMA) committee. The PMA committee will determine if the request will be approved, and if so, will assign a new advisor. If the request is not approved, the student remains with the current advisor. Discussions between the student and other faculty members regarding changing advisors are inappropriate prior to the PMA committee’s decision. However, the student may discuss any issues with the PMA Committee Chair at any time. If the student’s major advisor is the Department Chair, then the student will follow all aforementioned procedures with the PMA Committee Chair.
The Program of Study

Minimum Hours for Program

A minimum of 58 semester hours of course work is required for the Ph.D. program (see Appendix A). Ph.D. programs in special education typically exceed the 58-hour minimum imposed by the GSU Graduate Catalog. College of Education courses applied to this minimum must be at the 8000 or 9000 levels.

At least 15 semester hours of dissertation are required. Students must be registered for at least 3 semester hours of dissertation during the semester of graduation. Students should plan their program to meet their objectives for the Ph.D., not to conform to the minimum number of credit hours.

The doctoral planned program must be approved by the Doctoral Program Advisory Committee and filed with the College of Education Office of Academic Assistance within the first year following admission to the program or within the first 27 hours of course work, whichever is earlier.

Areas of Study

A doctoral program fosters the development of skills and abilities in a core area, major area, and university teaching cognate, and dissertation.

Core Area (18 hours minimum). The purpose of the core is to develop general research competencies including expertise in at least one particular research methodology appropriate to the major field and/or dissertation research, and to develop awareness of the context in which educational issues can be understood and interpreted.

A. Research Core (15 hours)
   1) Choose one course (3 hours):
      EPRS 8500 Qualitative/Interpretive Research in Education (3)
      EPRS 8530 Quantitative Methods and Analysis in Education (3)
   2) Required (6 hours):
      Select a two course sequence (6 hours) in research methodology:

         a) Quantitative Methodology
            EPRS 8540 Quantitative Methods and Analysis in Education II
            EPRS 8550 Quantitative Methods and Analysis in Education III (3)
            EPRS 8820 Institutional Research (3)
            EPRS 8830 Survey Research, Sampling Principles and Questionnaire Design (3)
            EPRS 8840 Meta-Analysis (3)
            EPRS 8860 Bayesian Statistics (3)
            EPRS 9550 Multivariate Analysis (3)
            EPRS 9560 Structural Equation Modeling (3)
            EPRS 9570 Hierarchical Linear Modeling I (3)
            EPRS 9571 Hierarchical Linear Modeling II (3)
            EPRS 9900 Advanced Research (3)
b) Qualitative Methodology
ANTH 8010 Qualitative Methods in Anthropology (3)
EPRS 8510 Qualitative Research in Education II (3)
EPRS 8520 Qualitative Research in Education III (3)
EPRS 8640 Case Study Methods (3)
EPRS 8700 Visual Research Methods (3)
EPRS 9120 Poststructural Inquiry (3)
EPRS 9400 Writing Qualitative Research Manuscripts (3)
EPSF 9280 Interpretive Inquiry in Education (3)

c) Single-Case Methodology
EPY 8850 Introduction to Single-Case Methodology (3)
EPY 8860 Applications of Single-Case Methodology (3)

d) Historical/Philosophical Methodology
EPSF 9850 Historical Research in Twentieth Century American Education (3)
EPSF 9930 Philosophical Analysis and Method (3)
HIST 8000 Introduction to Historical Methods and Theory (4)

e) Measurement Methodology
EPRS 7920 Classroom Testing, Grading, and Assessment (3)
EPRS 8920 Educational Measurement (3)
EPRS 9350 Introduction to Item Response Theory (3)
EPRS 9360 Advanced Item Response Theory (3)

3) Required (6 hours):
Two courses (6 hours) in advanced research methods as identified by the Doctoral Advisory Committee that is to be employed in the dissertation research. The doctoral advisory committee may require additional coursework in a research track. Students must complete two of the courses in the research area within the first two calendar years following admission to the doctoral program.

B. Social Foundations of Education and Psychology of Learning Core (3 hours). Select one:
EPSF 8270 Philosophy of Education (3)
EPSF 8280 Anthropology of Education (3)
EPSF 8310 Sociology of Education (3)
EPSF 8320 Politics and Policy in Education (3)
EPSF 8340 History of American Education (3)
EPSF 9260 Epistemology and Learning (3)
EPY 8030 Advanced Applied Behavior Analysis (3)
EPY 8050 The Psychology of Instruction (3)
EPY 8070 Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning (3)
EPY 8080 Memory and Cognition (3)
EPY 8180 Development During School Age (5 to 18 Years) (3)
EPY 8200 Advanced Developmental Psychology: Cognition and Intellect (3)
EPY 8220 Advanced Developmental Psychology: Personality and Socialization (3)
EPY 8260 Psychology of Adulthood and Aging (3)
Major Area (19 hours minimum): The purpose of this component is to increase the student’s knowledge base in the general area of special education and in the primary content area selected for the program.

Required (16 hours)
- EXC 8961 Professional Development Seminar in Special Education (4)
- EXC 8980 Professional Investigation and Writing in Special Education (3)
- EXC 9900 Research Seminar in Special Education (3)
- EXC 9981 Grant Proposal Writing in Special Education (3)
- EXC 9985 Ethics and the Advancement of Research (3)

Select (3 hours): Course will be selected and approved by the student’s Doctoral Advisory Committee.

University Teaching Cognate (6 hours minimum): The purpose of this component is to provide systematic study of, and a supervised internship in, college teaching

Required (6 hours):
- EPY 9000 Facilitating College Teaching (3)
- EXC 9660 Internship in Special Education I (3)

Dissertation (15 hours)

Required (15 hours)
- EXC 9990 Dissertation (15)

Program total: minimum of 58 semester hours

Professional Development Seminar. Included in the Major is the requirement that doctoral students enroll each Fall and Spring Semester for three (3) semester hours of EXC 8961 (Professional Development Seminar in Special Education) until they have advanced to candidacy (i.e., have an approved prospectus). (In certain cases, exceptions may be made regarding the number of semester hours taken each semester, as determined by the student’s major advisor and/or PMA Committee.) This seminar typically meets three times each semester. In the seminars, Ph.D. students meet with faculty members to discuss relevant issues in special education, to apply knowledge of learning theory to special education practice, and to report on research they have been conducting to meet residency requirements. Doctoral students are to attend all scheduled meetings of EXC 8961 during the semester they are enrolled. Absences must be approved in advance by their major advisor. Doctoral students also are to notify the PMA Committee Chair if they are going to be absent and to report whether the absence has been approved by their major advisor. Any missed seminars will result in an alternative assignment/activity provided by the major advisor. Absences that exceed one per semester, or any unexcused absence, will result in a grade of “U” for the semester, and will be reflected in the student’s Annual Evaluation.

Additional Information Pertaining to Program of Study

The minimum grade acceptable for course work in the major area is B; for course work outside the major area, the minimum grade is C. An overall cumulative GPA of at least 3.5 is required to be eligible to take the comprehensive examination and for graduation.
A minimum of 36 hours in the planned program must be earned in the doctoral program of study at Georgia State University. The 36-hour minimum may not include credits transferred from other institutions, from another doctoral program within the college or university, from a specialist program, or from non-degree status.

Continuous Enrollment Requirement: Graduate students must register for a total of at least six semester hours of course work during any period of three consecutive terms (i.e., fall, spring, and summer) until completion of degree. In order to graduate, students must be registered for at least 3 semester hours of dissertation during the semester of graduation. For the most up-to-date continuous enrollment policy, students are directed to go to: http://education.gsu.edu/oaa/.

A tentative schedule of the major area doctoral courses is in Appendix B.

**Changing from the old PhD Course of Study to the 2012 PhD Course of Study**

Students switching from the old EXC PhD program to the new EXC PhD program are required to take a total of two courses to gain credit for both EXC 8980 and EXC 9985. Students who have taken any two of the three following courses in the old program: a) EXC 9910 Research Seminar in Learning Disabilities, b) EXC 9920 Research Seminar in Behavior Disorders, or c) EXC 9930 Research seminar in Mental Retardation will be given credit for the following two course in the new program: a) EXC 8980 Professional Investigation and Writing in Special Education, and b) EXC 9985 Ethics and the Advancement of Research.

EXC 8010 Advanced Study of Exceptional Students will substitute for EXC 9981 Grant Proposal Writing in Special Education.
Residency

Purpose and Requirements

The Special Education Ph.D. Residency Program Plan includes activities in scholarship, teaching, service/professional development, and collegiality. The departmental residency requirements ensure each doctoral student is involved in professional activities beyond just completing doctoral coursework. Activities include assisting a faculty member in teaching a course (separate from the teaching internship requirement) and submitting a data-based article to a refereed journal as senior author. Other activities include attending professional conferences and participating in professional organizations.

As indicated in the GSU Graduate Catalog, the purpose of the residency is to provide close and continuous involvement with faculty members, professional colleagues, and other graduate students. This involvement provides supervised opportunities for development in teaching, research and service; time for concentrated study and coursework; and opportunities to read, reflect, and conduct research appropriate for the advanced degree.

The objectives of the doctoral residency are met in two ways: (1) by completing two of the four non-dissertation courses of the research-core requirement within the first two calendar years following admission to the doctoral program, and (2) by completing the Special Education Ph.D. Residency Program Plan that has been approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

A residency is important because a doctoral program is not just another collection of courses. A residency will provide experiences that broaden a student’s appreciation of the various elements of being a member of the profession. Under the supervision of his or her major advisor, a student will participate in various and numerous research activities, prepare and deliver presentations at state and national conferences, and teach at the university level. Completion of the approved Residency Program Report is a requirement for advancement to candidacy.

See Appendix C for a copy of the Educational Psychology and Special Education Ph.D. Residency Requirements.

EPSE- Doctoral Student Association

The purpose of the Educational Psychology and Special Education (EPSE) Doctoral Student Association (DSA) is to enrich the collegiate experience for doctoral students in the department. EPSE-DSA strives to provide quality, student-centered programs, services, and involvement opportunities which celebrate diversity, promote recruitment and retention, and foster leadership and student development. The goals of EPSE-DSA are: (1) to support doctoral students through their graduate school experience, (2) to facilitate fellowship opportunities among doctoral students, and (3) to provide a forum for the presentation of ideas and information that benefit doctoral students. To accomplish these goals, the EPSE-DSA executive board holds monthly meetings to discuss services, programs and opportunities needed. Decisions about what to sponsor are determined by feedback from active EPSE-DSA members. Two times each semester, EPSE-DSA sponsors topical events. Examples of event topics include: conferences and presentations, research designs, IRB, vita writing, studying for and practicing writing comprehensive exams, writing for publication, editing, and the prospectus and dissertation processes. In addition to topical events,
EPSE-DSA provides a monthly meeting time and place for members to collaborate and discuss current issues.

Support for Travel and Research

Multiple lines of financial support are available for doctoral students. General information regarding scholarships available to students at GSU can be found at:

http://webdb.gsu.edu/scholarships/scholarships_main_page.html

Specific to doctoral students, GSU has an internal grant program that allows full-time doctoral students (i.e., taking at least 9 hours/semester) who have completed their coursework and have an approved prospectus to compete for up to $1,000 for expenses associated with conducting their dissertation research. The funds may be requested for the current fiscal year (July - June) or the next fiscal year. All funds must be expended during the fiscal year requested and MUST be for research expenses and cannot include travel to professional meetings. Funding is awarded one time per doctoral student, but students may be eligible for additional funding via the “Shuttle Fellowship” (minimum $1,500, which does not have to be used for research). Applications typically are due at the end of November each year. Students should check the website for exact dates and application content.

http://www.gsu.edu/research/internal_grant_program.html

In addition to the funding available from the University, the College of Education and the EPSE Department offer mechanisms for funding of residency and dissertation research, and for travel to disseminate results.

College of Education. A portion of student activity fees are available for students who are members of any chartered organization. In addition to the department-specific EPSE-DSA, the COE has an organization for doctoral students called “Doctoral Fellows.” To be eligible for funds to attend conferences (i.e., travel, meals, registration), students must belong to that organization (via simple declaration). To request fiscal support, students complete the “Travel Fund Application” and “Travel Authorization Form.” Links to the forms and additional information are available at:

http://education.gsu.edu/main/4662.htm

The COE also awards the Hayden-Waltz Doctoral Dissertation Award each spring to a student with an approved dissertation prospectus. Applications typically are due in the spring. More information can be found on the COE website.

Department of EPSE. Members of EPSE are committed to ensuring that doctoral students develop competency in all skills valued in institutions of higher education. Toward that goal, funding is available to support research (maximum = $400) and travel to disseminate results (maximum = $1,000, which can be requested for two separate trips). Both full-time and part-time students can request EPSE support.
The Glenn A. Vergason Scholarship for advanced study in special education is awarded annually in the spring by EPSE. Criteria and application directions for the travel and research funding as well as the Vergason scholarship are available in the EPSE office.

As this list of scholarship and financial aid opportunities may not be complete, students interested in obtaining financial support for completing their doctoral degrees are encouraged to actively seek such information. For example, at the time of printing of this version of the Ph.D. Handbook, the dean of the COE is considering instituting a college-wide dissertation scholarship fund.
Annual Review

The Post-Master’s/Master’s Advisory Committee (PMA Committee) conducts an Annual Review of all Ph.D. students in the Special Education Program each spring semester. Ph.D. students must submit the following documentation to their major advisor by March 15 of each year. Failure to submit the report of progress may result in expulsion from the program.

Contents of Review

Students Who Have Not Advanced to Candidacy:
The PMA committee reviews the following information. Failure to submit any one of them will result in an unsatisfactory score on your Annual Review. Students submit the following items as a compilation of word-processed documents and photocopied artifacts (stapled together or in a folder), in this sequence:

♦ A written report of activities completed as a doctoral student during the academic year, including descriptive narrative regarding progress on the residency study, involvement in the profession, and achievements in publications and presentations. Students also should discuss attainment of professional goals and plans for the coming year.
♦ A copy of the planned program, noting course changes and terms completed with grades
♦ A copy of the Special Education Ph.D. Residency Program Plan, noting activities completed.
♦ Current vita
♦ Completed annual update of Doctoral Program Indicators Form (i.e., SACS outcomes data), which is emailed by Ms. Vaughn prior to the annual review due date and must be submitted to Ms. Vaughn and cc to your major advisor.

Students Who Have Advanced to Candidacy:
Students who have advanced to candidacy must submit a written summary of progress toward the completion of their dissertation to their major advisor. They also must complete the annual update of Doctoral Program Indicators Form (i.e., SACS outcomes data), which is emailed by Ms. Vaughn-Williams prior to the annual review due date.

Review and Notification Procedures

The PMA committee meets as a whole to review student progress. Major advisors present information for their students. Information on student performance is provided by the instructor of the professional development seminar (EXC 8961). Other members of the PMA committee who have interacted with the student during the year will provide information on student performance and professional growth. The evaluation includes (a) academic progress, (b) residency progress, (c) professional growth, and (d) professionalism. The committee rates student progress as satisfactory of unsatisfactory. The student receives the Committee’s report by the end of April. Any student receiving an initial unsatisfactory evaluation must meet with his or her Doctoral Program Advisory or Dissertation Committee Chair to devise a remediation plan. A copy of this plan is filed with the PMA Committee Chair.

Students who receive two unsatisfactory annual evaluations are notified that their academic standing is in jeopardy and that the PMA committee will review their status for possible dismissal from the program.
The Comprehensive Examination

Eligibility for Comprehensive Examination

Students are eligible to take the comprehensive examination when all courses have been completed, all incomplete grades have been removed, all residency requirements have been satisfied, and at the recommendation of their advisors and PMA committee. The student must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5 to be eligible to apply to take the comprehensive examination. The comprehensive examination is scheduled during a semester selected by the student (see section below) and his or her advisory committee. The examination reflects the content of the program of study. Application to take the examination should be made to the major advisor no later than two semesters prior to the semester in which the examination will be taken.

Students who receive external funding must complete activities related to the project prior to making application to take the comprehensive examination and prior to submitting their dissertation prospectuses. The project’s principal investigator(s) will determine which activities must be completed. Students must meet with the project’s principal investigator(s) to determine if all activities have been completed prior to making application to take their comprehensive examinations and prior to submitting their dissertation prospectuses. Students must obtain written documentation from the principal investigator(s) that all activities have been completed. Completion of the project activities will be reflected in the student’s annual reviews. These activities must be completed in addition to department (e.g., residency study), college, and university requirements.

Comprehensive Exam Schedule and Considerations

The PMA committee schedules examinations twice each year at or about: (a) the second full week of October, and (b) the first full week in March. No examinations are scheduled during the summer term.

Statement for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requiring accommodations for the comprehensive exam must be registered with the Office of Disability Services. Students need to start this process early to be sure they are registered in time for the examination.

Examination Content

Major Area (Monday, 9:00 – 4:00, with 1-hour scheduled lunch break). Members of the doctoral advisory committee design questions to assess the student’s content knowledge in the major area and in the cognate area. These questions are reviewed and discussed by the PMA prior to the exam.

General Area (Wednesday, 9:00 – 2:00; no lunch break). The General Special Education portion of the examination consists of two questions as follows:

(1) One month prior to the scheduled week of the examination, the student will receive from his or her major advisor the general topic of a question appropriate across the field of special education. The topic, and subsequent question, is generated by the PMA. On the Wednesday of the examination the student will respond to a specific question on that topic.
(2) A question that requires articulation of learning theory as it is embedded in and relates to the student’s major area of study.

**Research Area.** When students turn in their responses on Wednesday, they will receive a topic to develop into a research question and study. The student will prepare a written response following the guidelines in Appendix D. This written document will be turned in to the Chair of the PMA committee (or his/her designee) by noon on Friday of the following week. The student will be notified of a date and time to orally present this research project before a committee of at least three members of the PMA committee, including the student’s major professor.

**Students are permitted to bring a reference list to the examination.** No additional notes are allowed. All students must use a computer with word processing software that will be assigned to them by the administrative secretary to complete the comprehensive examination.

**Evaluation of Comprehensive Examinations**

The student’s Doctoral Program Advisory Committee prepares and grades questions in the major/cognate section of the exam. The PMA committee prepares and grades the questions in the general special education and research sections of the exam.

Each section of the exam is graded on a pass or fail basis. Questions are graded according to the criteria available in Appendix E. The committee grading a question may require a student to rewrite a question for greater clarity or detail before making a final grading decision for that question. The PMA discusses students’ responses and makes the final grade determination.

If the student fails one section of the exam, that section is retaken at the next departmental administration of the comprehensive exam. If the student fails more than one section, he/she must retake the entire exam at the next departmental administration of the comprehensive exam. A student who fails to pass the comprehensive examination after two attempts will be dismissed from the Ph.D. program.

Students will be notified of the results of their examination scores by their major professor.
The Dissertation Process

Enrollment for Dissertation Hours

Upon successful completion of the comprehensive exam, students must enroll for a minimum of 3 semester hours of credit during at least two out of each three-term period until graduation, including 3 hours the semester they graduate. These hours of credit must include a minimum of 9 hours of dissertation (EXC 9990), but also may include other coursework. Enrollment for dissertation credit is permitted only after successful completion of the comprehensive examination. Students should follow the requirements for enrollment in dissertation hours which are published in the GSU Graduate Catalog in effect at the time of their admission.

Dissertation Advisory Committee

At the point of dissertation students may change the membership of their advisory committees. At a minimum, one new member must be added to the Program Advisory Committee, which at this point becomes the student’s Dissertation Advisory Committee. At least one member of this committee must have experience/expertise in the research paradigm to be used in the dissertation.

Dissertation Formats

The College of Education recognizes two formats for the dissertation: (a) the traditional five-chapter format and (b) the review and research manuscript format. Each student and his or her Dissertation Advisory Committee should determine the proper format for the dissertation.

There are no fixed conventions, rules, or practices for writing a dissertation. Students are restrained, however, by the technical requirements in the College of Education document on dissertations and the current APA Publication Manual. When there is a conflict between those two sets of guidelines, the COE document applies.

Writing the Dissertation Prospectus

The dissertation prospectus is written following successful completion of the comprehensive examination. Prior to beginning the prospectus, the student should download a copy of the College of Education’s Guide for Preparation of Prospectuses and Dissertations from the College of Education Office of Academic Assistance at the following website address:


The prospectus must be approved by the major advisor prior to the student providing copies to other members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee. Several drafts of the prospectus may be required prior to approval by the major advisor. Students should allow two weeks for review of each draft by the major advisor.
The dissertation prospectus should include the following information. This is a guideline only, and may be reconfigured by dissertation advisors.

A. Statement of the Problem and Supporting Literature:
   ♦ Theoretical basis for the proposed investigation
   ♦ Review of research, legal, philosophical, or professional experience that leads to a statement of a recognized problem
   ♦ Presentation of a proposed line of inquiry to address the problem.
   ♦ Hypotheses or research questions
   For the prospectus, the dissertation advisor will direct the student regarding the amount of detail that should be included in the literature review. In some cases, a student will be asked to do a complete literature review for the prospectus; in other cases, the student will be directed to give just the primary points made in the main bodies of literature upon which the research is based.

B. Methodology:
   ♦ Participants: selection, inclusion/exclusion criteria, sample size, and rationale
   ♦ Setting and rationale
   ♦ List of materials and equipment needed and rationale
   ♦ Research design and rationale
   ♦ Statement and operationalization of independent and dependent variables
   ♦ Data analysis
   ♦ Timeline for executing the research plan

Prospectus Defense

The prospectus is presented orally at a publicly announced, open meeting of the Dissertation Advisory Committee attended by a majority of the Committee, with the concurrence and indirect participation of any absent member.

Prior to submitting a prospectus announcement to the Office of Academic Assistance, the dissertation advisor must give approval for the student to submit a Prospectus Summary form to the Department Chair, as required by the Dean of the College of Education. An outline of the form is provided in Appendix F. Students may get an electronic copy of the form from their advisors. The Department Chair is allowed five (5) business days to review the prospectus summary and ask for changes, prior to signing the prospectus announcement. An announcement of the prospectus presentation must be made 10 working days before the scheduled presentation. The announcement is made on the Announcement of Presentation of Prospectus form available in the department. Final copies of the prospectus are provided to all members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee at this time. Prospectus defense presentations must be scheduled between the first day of class and the last day of exams. No dissertation prospectus presentation can be scheduled during the summer term. It is recommended that students ask another student to attend the defense and take notes.
Prospectus Approval

Approval and acceptance of the prospectus requires a majority vote for acceptance by the Dissertation Advisory Committee. The Dissertation Advisory Committee may require revisions prior to final acceptance.

All research conducted by students must be approved by the student’s Dissertation Advisory Committee prior to the student’s beginning the research. In addition to approval from the committee, a student who plans to conduct research pertaining to human subjects must secure approval in accordance with federal protection of human subject requirements. The human subject protection policy applies only to research with living human subjects about whom the researcher obtains data through intervention or interaction.

A student whose planned research meets one of these criteria for the protection of human subjects must submit an Application for Approval of Research Project Involving Human Subjects (http://irbwise.gsu.edu). Additional information is available from the Institutional Review Board website (www.gsu.edu/irb).

Advancement to Candidacy

Students must meet the following requirements to be recommended for advancement to candidacy:

- Enrollment in EXC 8961 during each Fall and Spring semester until advancement to candidacy
- Successful completion of the comprehensive examination
- Completion of all residency requirements
- Successful defense of the dissertation prospectus

The student’s Dissertation Advisory Committee is responsible for making a recommendation for advancement to candidacy to the Dean of the College of Education. Students should secure the form, complete the necessary sections, and have it available for signatures at the time of the prospectus defense.

Writing the Dissertation

Rules of the Road

Rule 1. Send drafts of your dissertation ONLY to your dissertation advisor; do NOT send any version of your dissertation to other members of your committee until your dissertation advisor tells you to do so.

Rule 2. It is expected that the dissertation will be a clear exposition of the study carried out. Making assumptions about the knowledge of your committee or readers of your document is a fatal practice. It is your job to produce all necessary information in a clear, logical, grammatical, and professional manner. Use your spelling and grammar checkers for your initial review.

Rule 3. Your name is not the only one that shows up on your dissertation. Your dissertation advisor and committee members are held accountable for the quality of the finished document. Therefore,
expect to make modifications until the committee is satisfied that the document is something they are willing to put their names on. Dissertations are not taken lightly; faculty members read them very, very carefully.

**Rule 4.** It should be clear that the dissertation is not about just collecting and analyzing data. It also includes the writing of a document that must meet technical standards for writing and professional communication. One can “fail” the final oral examination not only on the basis of inability to defend the substance of one’s study, but also on the basis of a poorly written document. Give special attention to the abstract, since this is the first, and often the only, contact people have with your study.

**Rule 5.** Do not rush the writing of your dissertation. You should allow enough time for faculty members to read your document and respond to it. A general rule of thumb is to allow at least two weeks for faculty members to read and provide feedback on your dissertation drafts.

**Rule 6.** Plan your writing using the outline and timeline in Appendix G as guides.

**Preparing the Dissertation for Defense**

All dissertations must conform to the College of Education *Guidelines for Preparing Dissertations*. These guidelines can be downloaded from the web site of the College of Education Office of Academic Assistance at


**Dissertation Defense**

The dissertation is defended orally at a publicly announced, open meeting of the Dissertation Advisory Committee attended by a majority of the Committee, with the concurrence and indirect participation of any absent member. It is held on the main campus of the University. Guidelines for the announcement of the meeting are given with the *Announcement of Dissertation Defense* form, available in the department.

A public announcement of the oral defense of the dissertation is disseminated via the Office of Academic Assistance to COE faculty members. The announcement must be submitted to the Office of Academic Assistance at least 10 working days prior to the scheduled defense. Oral defenses must be scheduled between the first day of classes and the last day of exams. No dissertation defense can be scheduled during the summer term.

At the same time the announcement of the oral defense is submitted, a typed copy of the completed dissertation is made available for faculty members’ review in the Office of the Dean of the College of Education. Final copies also are distributed to the Dissertation Advisory Committee at this time. Approval and acceptance of the dissertation requires a favorable vote of a majority of the Dissertation Advisory Committee.
Publishing the Dissertation

Students are encouraged to publish their literature review and results of their dissertation research, however no part of the dissertation may be published prior to the dissertation defense and acceptance of the dissertation by the student’s dissertation committee.
Degree Completion

The following list will assist students in completing final requirements prior to graduation:

- Graduate students must meet continuous enrollment requirement. Graduate students must register for at least a total of six semester hours of course work during any period of three consecutive terms (fall, spring, and summer) until completion of degree. Students must be enrolled for 3 semester hours of credit during the semester they are scheduled to graduate. The most up-to-date continuous enrollment policy can be found at: http://education.gsu.edu/oaa/

- The student must file an application for graduation with the Office of the Registrar at least two academic terms prior to the expected date of graduation. The PMA committee recommends that students submit their application for graduation at least three semesters prior to the term in which they hope they will graduate.

- All requirements for the doctoral degree must be successfully completed prior to the date of graduation. It is the student’s responsibility to meet with Carla Woods in the Office of Academic Assistance to verify that all requirements for graduation have been met. Students are encouraged to schedule a meeting with Ms. Woods at the same time they submit their application for graduation (i.e., three semesters before they anticipate graduating).

- A minimum of 58 semester hours of course work used in the doctoral degree may not be more than seven years old at the date of admission to candidacy. The dissertation must be concluded within two years of admission to candidacy.
Appendix A

EPSE Special Education Ph.D. Program Guidelines

Total degree hours: Minimum 58 semester hours

Core hours: 18 hours
Major hours: minimum 19 hours
University Teaching Cognate hours: 6
Dissertation: minimum 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Teaching Cognate</th>
<th>Dissertation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) EPRS 8500 or EPRS 8530</td>
<td>1) EXC 8961</td>
<td>1) EPY 9000</td>
<td>1) EXC 9990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) research track I</td>
<td>2) EXC 8980</td>
<td>2) EXC 9660</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) research track II</td>
<td>3) EXC 9981</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) advanced research</td>
<td>4) EXC 9985</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) advanced research</td>
<td>5) EXC 9900</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) social foundations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Tentative Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Spring Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2012-2013</strong></td>
<td>EXC 8980</td>
<td>EXC 9981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EXC 8961</td>
<td>EXC 8961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EXC 9900*</td>
<td>EXC 9900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2013-2014</strong></td>
<td>EXC 9985</td>
<td>EXC 8961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EXC 8961</td>
<td>EXC 9900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EXC 9900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OFFERED AS NEEDED:
EPY 8850 Introduction to Single Case Methodology
EPY 8860 Applications of Single Case Methodology

OFFERED EVERY SEMESTER
EXC 9660 Internship in Special Education
EXC 9990 Dissertation
Ph.D. Residency Program Plan
Department of Educational Psychology, Special Education, and Communication Disorders

NAME: 
ADVISOR: 
PANTHER #: 
MAJOR: 

As requirements are completed, they should be approved and initialed by the major advisor. All requirements must be completed prior to advancement to candidacy. No single activity may be used to meet more than one of these requirements.

Area I
All items must be completed:
Senior author of a data-based article submitted to a refereed journal
Teach a college level course that is approved by the advisor

_______ Present authored or coauthored content at state/regional/national/international conference
_______ Complete residency course work requirements as specified in the Graduate Catalog

Area II
At least two activities, each approved in advance by your advisor, are required from the following:
_______ Participate in ongoing research and scholarly experiences by assisting in data collection for a faculty or doctoral level research project (your dissertation does not qualify)
_______ Participate in identifying and applying for a grant/fellowship
_______ Serve the institution or profession with evidence of participation

Area III
At least two activities, each approved in advance by your advisor, are required from the following:

_______ Publication of article submitted for Area I
_______ Author or co-author a publication in a refereed or non-refereed scholarly journal or book (repeatable once with different content)
_______ Present authored or coauthored content at state/regional/national/international conference (different content than presented in Area I activity above)
_______ Present authored or coauthored content at a university based conference
_______ Author or co-author content that is presented at a national/international conference (attendance or presentation not required)
_______ Conduct a professional workshop (at least ½ day in length with participant evaluation)
_______ Attend an international/national/state/regional conference
_______ Attend a professional workshop related to research (e.g., IES workshop)
_______ Assist in supervision of practicum (not to meet teaching internship requirement)
_______ Hold office in a professional organization/association

Revised April 2014
Appendix D

Outline for Comprehensive Examination Research Project

Your topic:______________________________________________

Directions: The purpose of this portion of the comprehensive examinations is to demonstrate your ability to develop a high quality research project. Your research project description should be a balance between what is realistic and ideal taking into consideration research principles identified by the Institutes of Education Sciences (IES) and your field within special education. The information below serves as a guideline for what information is recommended for inclusion in manuscripts (thus studies) that report new data collections. Your response must be double-spaced, with a minimum of 12-point font. All pages must have a header and page number. The total number of allowable pages is 15 (not inclusive of references). Committee members are only required to grade material provided within the allowable page length. Please see APA 6th edition (particularly the Appendices) for additional details that much be included.

A. Introduction (3-page maximum)

1. The importance of the problem.
2. Theoretical and practical implications.
3. Review of relevant scholarship.
4. Relationship to previous work.
5. If other aspects of this study have been reported on previously, how the current report differs from these reports.
6. Specific hypotheses and objectives.
7. Theories or other means used to derive hypotheses.
8. Primary and secondary hypotheses; other planned analyses
9. How hypotheses and research design relate to one another.

B. Methodology (8-pages maximum)

1. Participant inclusion and exclusion criteria.
2. Major demographic characteristics as well as important topic-specific characteristics,
3. Procedures for selecting participants including sampling method, percentage of sample anticipated, and recruitment procedures.
4. Setting(s) and location(s) and the rationale for selecting.
5. Agreements and payments to be made to participants, if appropriate.
6. Proposed sample size including how the sample size was determined.
7. Power analyses (if applicable), or methods used to determine precision of parameter estimates.
8. Operational definitions of all primary and secondary measures and covariates (if appropriate).
9. Methods used to collect data.
10. Methods used to enhance the quality of measurements including training and reliability of data collected.
11. Any applicable psychometric properties of measures used (validity, reliability). If research made measures are used, explain how reliability and validity was determined.
12. Fidelity of implementation information across conditions (if applicable) including associated inter-rater agreement.
13. Study materials needed to implement the study not including the intervention or other condition(s) (if applicable).
14. Description of intervention (i.e., exposure, quantity, number of sessions, time span) and other condition(s) (if applicable).
15. How participants were grouped during delivery including the unit of analysis.
16. Description of who will deliver intervention and how they will be prepared to provide the intervention.
17. Observational information including inter-rater agreement procedures.
18. Social validity information (if applicable).
19. Procedures to address potential attrition.
20. Any additional information relevant to the Methodology of your study that the committee will need to determine the quality of your study.

C. Research design (2-pages)
1. Whether or not conditions were manipulated or naturally observed.
2. Type of research design and rationale for selecting.

D. Faux expected results and interpretation (2-pages)
1. Results according to each research question.
2. Figures and/or graphs.
3. Implications for future research, program, or policy taking into consideration based on your findings within the context of current literature and/or theory.

E. References (no minimum or maximum; just appropriate)
Include all the references used in your paper in APA 6th edition format.

Procedural information.
Submit your response to the administrator of the examination by noon on:______________

Your oral presentation is scheduled for:__________________________________________

For additional procedural information, please consult your dissertation committee chair.

Revised: February 2015
# Appendix E

## Doctoral Comprehensive Exam Scoring Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Score Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 points</td>
<td><strong>Excellent Answer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All parts of questions answered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well referenced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate synthesis and application of literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good organization and writing style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 points</td>
<td><strong>Passing Answer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All parts answered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adequate professional references</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Straight forward answer, limited synthesis or application of literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary weakness is in organization and writing style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 point</td>
<td><strong>Answer requires remediation or rewriting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not all parts of question(s) answered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor response requiring fuller exposition and/or referencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minimal synthesis or application of the literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rationale or foundation for answer not provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lacking logical organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Misinterpreted the question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 points</td>
<td><strong>Failing Answer</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F
EPSE Prospectus Summary

(Submit this to the Chair at least 5 business days in advance of needing the Chair’s signature on the prospectus announcement form.)

Student’s Name:  
Advisor’s Name:  
Title of Dissertation:  

A. Statement of the Problem:  
1. State the purpose of this study (Why does it need to be done or what contribution will it make?):  
2. Briefly describe the theory, model, or observation upon which the study’s scientific or application question is based:  
3. Research hypothesis or question to be investigated:  

B. Literature: Cite and summarize up to three but no less than two research papers that are foundational to your study:  

C. Methodology:  
1. Specify and briefly describe the independent variable(s) in your study, if appropriate:  
2. Specify and briefly describe the dependent variable(s) in your study:  
3. Specify your research design with a brief statement of your reason for selecting it:  
4. Participants:  
   a. Demographic characteristics: (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, disability, etc):  
   b. Sample size  
   c. Participant selection procedures:  
5. Setting for the study and rationale for the selection:  
6. Implementation procedures:  
   a. Investigator/participant interaction (if any):  
   b. Personnel training (if any assistants are employed):  
   c. Intervention monitoring (if any assistants are employed):  
   d. Other considerations of note:  
7. Data collection system (e.g., observational) or instrumentation (e.g., test), including reliability and validity of measurement system or instrument(s).  
8. Briefly describe your approach to data analysis, e.g., graphic, criterion related, or statistical analysis:  

This is an accurate summary of the prospectus to be presented to the dissertation committee. Student will let Chair know of any major changes that occurred as a result of the prospectus committee meeting.  

__________________________  
Major Advisor  
__________________________  
Student  
__________________________  
Date
Appendix G
Outline of Steps in Writing the Dissertation

The College of Education has approved two formats for dissertations: the traditional chapter format and the review and research manuscript format.

**Traditional Chapter Format:** The five chapters of the traditional dissertation format are (1) The Statement of the Problem, (2) Review of the Literature, (3) Methods, (4) Results, and (5) Discussion.

**Research Articles Format:** In this format you will write your dissertation in the form of two manuscripts that may be submitted for publication. The first manuscript is a comprehensive literature review. The second is a research manuscript that includes the Introduction (purpose of the study, research hypotheses, null hypotheses, limitations, and assumptions), Literature Review, Methods (subjects, materials, instrumentation, procedure, and data analysis), Results, and Discussion. Additional material may be required in Appendices by your Dissertation Advisory Committee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Should be submitted to your dissertation advisor only.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Options</strong></td>
<td>Submit chapters 1, 2, &amp; 3 (traditional chapter format) or Introduction, Literature Review and Methods (manuscript format) to your advisor for approval while you are collecting or analyzing your data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Submit chapters 1, 2, 3, &amp; 4 [chapter 1 – 3 with corrections] or Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, and Results (research articles format) to your advisor as soon as you finish data analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Submit chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, &amp; 5 [chapters 1 - 4 with corrections] or Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results, and Discussion (research articles format) to your advisor as soon as you finish the discussion section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THIS IS YOUR FIRST DRAFT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> It is not recommended that you submit chapters one at a time. The reason is that the parts of the document must relate to one another and be internally consistent. The advisor, of course, may choose not to review the previously submitted chapters. Your advisor will guide you as to what he or she expects you to submit. It also is a good idea to return the list of corrections or previous copy on which corrections were made so that the advisor may be assured that you have done what was requested. Be certain to carefully identify the various iterations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td>Your advisor will tell you when he or she will be able to give you feedback. This may be anywhere from two [2] weeks to a month, depending on the time in the semester and other responsibilities of your advisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wait Time:</strong></td>
<td>2-4 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 3</strong></td>
<td>Prepare your revisions based on the feedback from your advisor. The amount of time this takes depends on you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revise:</strong></td>
<td>1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THIS IS YOUR SECOND DRAFT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Step 4** | Submit draft 2 to your advisor. Do not be surprised when you submit this draft that there will still be revisions to make. One of the characteristics of this process is that when one problem is cleared up, another may assume...
ascendancy. Further, your advisor may decide that a previous suggestion for revision is no longer a good one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 5</th>
<th>Wait Time: 2-4 weeks</th>
<th>Wait! See step 2.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 6</td>
<td>Revise</td>
<td>Revise. <strong>Steps 4 – 5 may continue through several drafts, especially if you have a very complex study.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 7</td>
<td>Announcement</td>
<td>When your advisor approves your draft, you may submit the final version to committee members and Office of Academic Assistance. You must submit your final draft to the Office of Academic Assistance at least ten (10) working days prior to your defense. This draft should be in tip-top shape, including typing. Do not expect your committee to be your editor; do it yourself or hire someone to assist you. Don’t give your committee sloppily printed, unreadable light copies. In fact, the recommendation is that the final draft should be typed and printed as if it were going to be the final copy. In other words, from the beginning, pay attention to spelling, punctuation, margins, and the other qualities of good writing and required format. This copy will be reviewed by the Office of Academic Assistance to assure compliance with the APA Manual and College of Education format requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 8</td>
<td>Preparation: 2-3 weeks</td>
<td>Prepare for the dissertation defense. Discuss your presentation with your advisor. Make arrangements with another student who will take notes for you during your defense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 9</td>
<td>Oral Defense</td>
<td>Expect revisions. If you have followed these steps, these should be minor revisions and corrections. Note that there may be increasing numbers of other faculty members attending final orals because defense announcements are sent to all departments in the College of Education. Other students, as well as faculty members, are invited to attend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 10</td>
<td>Revise</td>
<td>Revise at the direction of your Dissertation Advisory Committee. Depending on the number of revisions required, your entire Dissertation Advisory committee may want to read your final product again, or final approval may be left to the discretion of your committee chair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 11</td>
<td>Submit</td>
<td>Submit final copies to Office of Academic Assistance. Make sure that all appropriate paperwork has been submitted. The Assistant Director of Academic Assistance will clear you for graduation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Denouement**
A careful reading of the above steps reveals that the process of writing your dissertation will take anywhere from 13 to 18 weeks AFTER you have submitted the first draft to your major professor until the final defense. This assumes you will make your revisions in a timely fashion.

Therefore, work backward from the deadline dates you must meet in order to graduate in the semester you prefer. This will give you a deadline for getting your first draft to your major professor. Be realistic! Don’t plan for faculty members to give you feedback in one week; it does not work that way. If you miss your deadlines, don’t expect faculty members to take up the slack. Change your graduation date.

Remember, even the best writer cannot produce an acceptable document in one draft. Expect to make revisions; they are in your best interest.
Appendix H
Guide for Prospective Doctoral Students in Education of Students with Exceptionalities

Thank you for your inquiry about our Ph.D. program in special education. Our Ph.D. program is comprised of national leaders in special education known for excellence in research, teaching, and service. An emphasis of our Ph.D. program is to prepare students to work in higher education and other research-oriented public or private organizations. Former Ph.D. students currently work across the nation and internationally at leading universities. A strength of program is the diversity of expertise in a variety of areas including autism, behavior disorders, deaf education, early childhood special education, intellectual disabilities (mild, moderate, severe, profound), learning disabilities, and physical and health disabilities.

All prospective students are encouraged to apply but due to rigor and time commitment of our program, priority is given to students who can attend full-time. Please feel free to use the following information to assist in learning more about our Ph.D. program. Most of the Department’s classes are offered in the evening beginning at either 4:30 or 7:15 PM and meet once per week, except in the summer when most classes are day classes. You can find additional information about our programs at the following sites:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Needed</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Special Education Program Question</td>
<td>Dr. Susan Easterbrook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Special Education Program Coordinator)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:seasterbrook@gsu.edu">seasterbrook@gsu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Ph.D. Program Questions</td>
<td>Dr. David Houchins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ph.D. Program Coordinator)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dhouchins@gsu.edu">dhouchins@gsu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty websites</td>
<td><a href="http://esc.education.gsu.edu/profile/">http://esc.education.gsu.edu/profile/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall general questions</td>
<td>Ms. Sandy Vaughn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University main site</td>
<td><a href="mailto:svaughn@gsu.edu">svaughn@gsu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Education site</td>
<td><a href="http://education.gsu.edu/">http://education.gsu.edu/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Academic Assistance (COE) site</td>
<td><a href="http://education.gsu.edu/student-services/office-of-academic-assistance/">http://education.gsu.edu/student-services/office-of-academic-assistance/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid (GSU) site</td>
<td><a href="http://sfs.gsu.edu/the-financial-aid-process/">http://sfs.gsu.edu/the-financial-aid-process/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission-application site</td>
<td><a href="http://education.gsu.edu/admissions/">http://education.gsu.edu/admissions/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding opportunities site (e.g., GRA, GTA, Fellowships, grant funding, etc.)</td>
<td><a href="http://esc.education.gsu.edu/student-resources/financial-support/">http://esc.education.gsu.edu/student-resources/financial-support/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Doctoral Student Association</td>
<td>Facebook page:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GSU EPSE Doctoral Student Association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>